

New Internationalist Easier English
Ready Intermediate Lesson

Freedom for West Papua?



New Internationalist
The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice

This lesson:

Speaking – prediction and quiz

Vocabulary

Reading

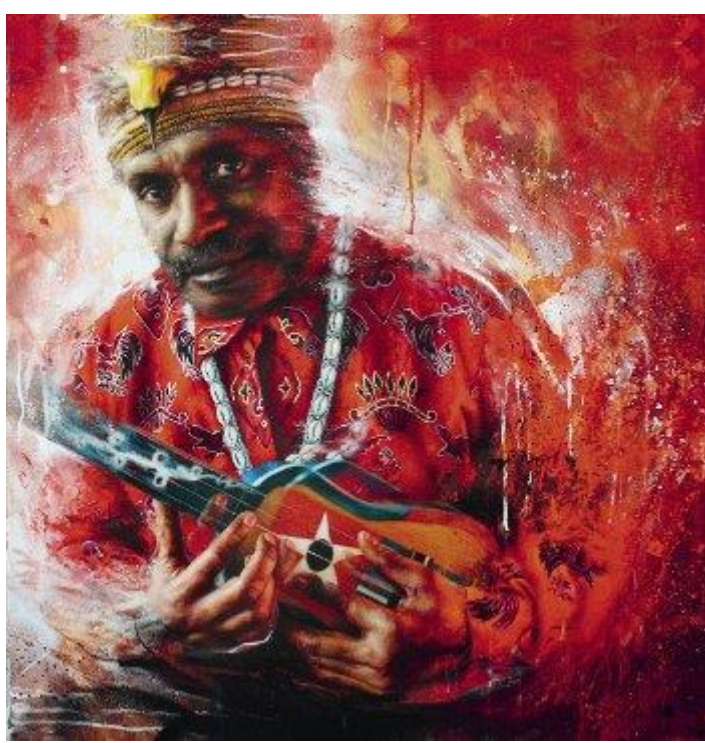
Speaking – role-play

Where is West Papua?

What do you think
the:

- people
 - food
 - clothes
 - culture
 - politics
- might be like?





Meet some
of the
people from
West Papua
– were you
right?



In pairs, decide on answers for this quick quiz:

1. West Papua is:

a) an independent country. b) part of Indonesia. c) part of Papua New Guinea.

2. How many people live in West Papua?

a) About 400,000 b) About 4 million c) About 4 billion

3. What is the level of illiteracy (of people who are 15 – 44) in West Papua?

a) 15% b) 35% c) 55%

4. One problem in West Papua is that

*a) there are not enough new settlers. b) settlers go to the countryside and mountains.
c) local people have a high level of HIV.*

5. How many people from West Papua were arrested because of politics in 2016:

a) 80 b) 800 c) 8000

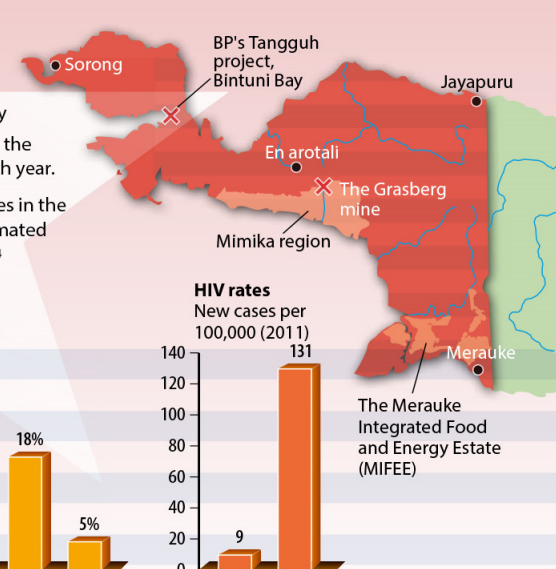
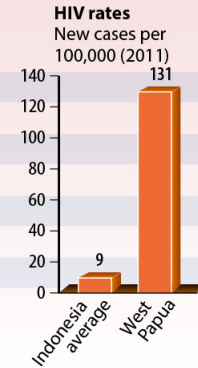
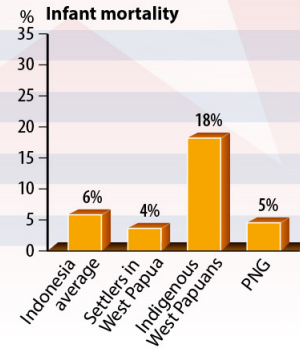
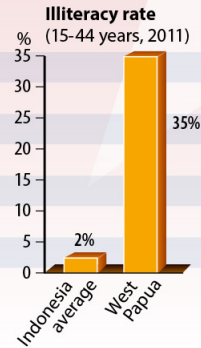
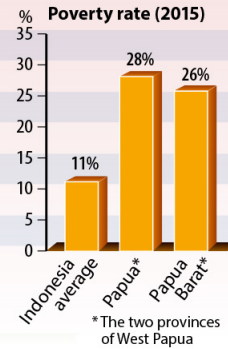
**6. 1% of the rainforest in the world is in West Papua and Papua New Guinea.
What % of the world's plant and animal species do they have?**

a) 1% b) 3% c) 5%

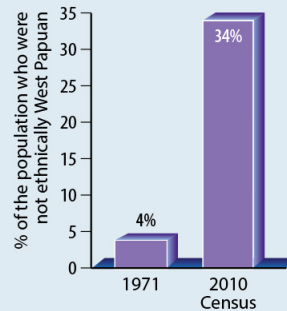
then check your answers on the infographic>>>>>>

Area of West Papua: **459** million hectares.
This is **24%** of Indonesia's land area.
Population (2015 estimate): **4,020,900**
This is just **2%** of Indonesia's population.¹

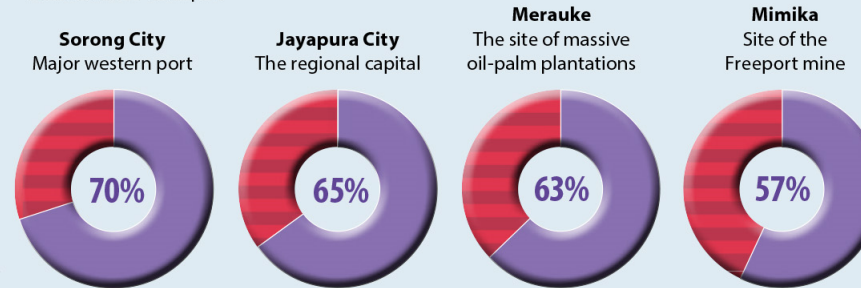
Key indicators²



The settler population³ is rising fast*

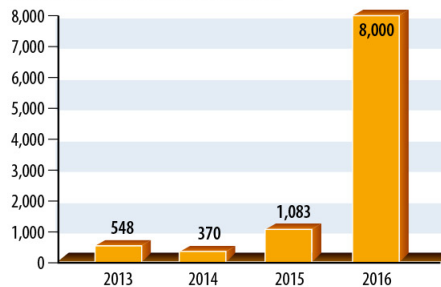


Non-Papuans are already the majority in wealthier regencies: coastal cities and agricultural lowlands. For example:



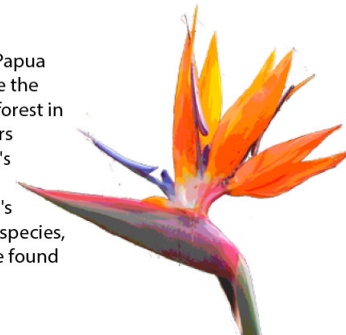
*Indonesian government figures. Many West Papuans believe the settler ratio is actually higher.

Political arrests in West Papua⁵



2,109 arrests on a single day of demonstrations, 2 May 2016.⁶
Up to **500,000** West Papuans have been killed during the occupation, according to campaigners.⁷

West Papua and Papua New Guinea share the third-largest rainforest in the world. It covers **1%** of the world's land area but has **5%** of the world's plant and animal species, **2/3** of which are found nowhere else.⁸



Match:

1) dreadlocks

2) resistance

3) victim

4) to empower

5) occupation

6) demonstration

7) massacre

8) violation

a) Killing many people in a terrible way

b) When you refuse to accept something or fight against it.

c) The period of time when a military force controls a country.

d) When people march to show they disagree with something.

e) An action that breaks or works against something eg. a law.

f) If you don't comb your hair, but twist it into ringlets or braids when wet

g) To make people feel they are more powerful.

h) A person who suffers or dies because of an accident or event.

In groups of 5, each learner will now:

- read one of these 5 personal stories, then
- imagine they are the person they read about, and
- share their information in groups of 5 and
- discuss what they can do to change the situation

- a) **Rosa Moiwend**, *a research and political activist. She lives in Jayapura, the largest city in West Papua.*
- b) **Hana Yeimo**, *a sweet-potato farmer in Enarotali, central West Papua.*
- c) **Max Binur**, *an artist and cultural activist. He lives in the northwest port city of Sorong.*
- d) **Filep Karma**, *a civil servant in Jayapura*
- e) **Elizabeth Ndiwaen**, *who lives in the city of Merauke, in the southeast of the country, near the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE) – a very big Indonesian project with palm-oil plantations and industrial agriculture, planned to replace 1.2 million hectares of rainforest.*

Before reading, look through the 5 texts quickly (1 minute only) to find out who these photos are of:



Rosa Moiwend a research and political activist. She lives in Jayapura, the largest city in West Papua.

We see things every day – discrimination, racism and violence – that make us think of the occupation. My grandparents were in the country when the Indonesian military invaded in 1961. My family was living in Ninati village in the south. Most of the family had to leave very quickly and go across the border to Papua New Guinea – only my grandfather stayed. Other tribes now live in our old village and we have lost contact with all of the family that crossed the border. That's the biggest personal loss to our family.

There's a lot of discrimination every day in West Papua. The Indonesians control our land and also want to change the way we think. They teach wrong things at school, for example, about our history. It's like mental slavery: they teach us that we have to accept unfair treatment and we start to accept it. This is dangerous. They are changing us to be more like the Indonesians.

For example, I used to read the afternoon news at a local TV show. I used to have small dreadlocks. The producer asked me to change my hair - to straighten my hair to look 'neater'. I said the programme was about Papua, so it should show how Papua is, but they wanted to change me. They then gave me a different job, not on camera, so I left the job. I still have my dreadlocks today.

On 16 March 2006 in Jayapura, police arrested everyone who had dreadlocks and cut their hair. This continued for two weeks. Many indigenous people cut their hair. I didn't want to, so I hid for quite a while and did not go home. It was not just about hair. We have dreadlocks because this is our identity, not because we like reggae or Rasta. A lot of my friends with dreadlocks feel the same. Dreadlocks are now a symbol of resistance and of a free West Papua, a challenge to what the Indonesian state taught us.

When I was at school, I wanted long and straight hair. We all did. Our toy dolls had long straight hair. And there are no beauty products for our skin colour.

But the resistance is very strong and popular now. There are many t-shirts which say 'I am Papua, curly hair and dark skin'. Many young people wear these t-shirts in many cities. But the Indonesian occupiers stop us being who we are. Parents need to teach their children: about who they are, their identities as West Papuans. We must continue to be West Papuans for when West Papua is free again.

West Papua will be free; in time. When I was little, our parents talked quietly about politics inside the house. Now, it is more open, even in the media. That is because of many different people working together.

Women are often active, for example, Mama Yosepha [Yosepha Alomang, winner of the 2001 Goldman Environmental Prize]. She never went to school but she organized women to blockade the airport and the Freeport mine.

Things are changing now. The movement is more open and advanced, women are taking on more and different roles. This is a national fight for both men and women. All generations have to work hard together.

Hana Yeimo *a sweet-potato farmer in Enarotali, central West Papua. On 8 December 2014, four local teenagers were shot dead by security forces near her home. They were protesting because soldiers beat schoolchildren the day before.*

I am married and have an 11-year-old child. On a normal day, I do my farming, and I usually play cards with my friends.

Police and military watch us all the time. The military shoot at us suddenly for no reason.

About nine in the morning I heard gunshots in the fields. So I went to check. The police and the military were shooting at my people. So I stood between the security forces and my people. The security forces said: 'Go away, you could get shot'. I shouted back at them that I did not care, just shoot me. I saw them shoot my people. I threw things. My family told me to stop or they would arrest me. But I did not care, I just wanted them to go. I screamed at them to let us be free and independent, not shot and killed. I screamed and lost my voice that day.

On that field, children died because the military shot them. Many others were wounded. I helped the people, who were shot, including my cousin, into a car. I know all the victims. The victims do not want to talk about it any more. They are tired of repeating the same story without any result.

Max Binur an artist and cultural activist. He lives in the northwest port city of Sorong.

I love arts and I am a humanist. Almost every day I talk to indigenous people in towns and villages. We talk about environmental destruction and how to use local wisdom and culture to fight against injustice. We paint and make sculptures and other art.

I started Belantara Papua, an organization for empowering indigenous people. We fight to protect the environment; we check the effects of palm-oil, mining and illegal cutting of trees on indigenous people. I also support indigenous people to use our culture. Demonstrations will not solve the problem – the government does not listen. So I use culture to fight.

I also help children in villages who have difficulties in education. I help them to build schools or art centres in areas with no schools. I also encourage them to dance, craft and sculpt at the art centres. We are fighting the violence in West Papua through culture.

I first saw the violence of the Indonesian military when I was four years old. I used to live in Biak with my family. My father had been a police officer since the time of the Dutch. I grew up with the police. When I was a small kid, police hit my head was hit with a rifle.

I saw that state violence is very real. When I was at university in the 1990s, the Free West Papua movement was growing. I went to protests. And finally when I worked at an NGO in Jayapura, I became very aware of human rights violations. This changed me and I decided to work for West Papua and its people.

I am very sure that we will be free, sooner or later. Either I or my children will have freedom. I am very certain.

We need help from the rest of the world. First, help us tell everyone about the human rights violations in West Papua. Second, put pressure on the Indonesian government to cut the military violence in West Papua. Third, ask for a new independence referendum (the referendum in 1969 was fake and it is the reason for the problem in West Papua now). Finally, help us talk about the problems at the UN.

Filep Karma, *a civil servant in Jayapura*

I work at the office every day. But I usually ask if I can leave the office when there are demonstrations like the ones the KNPB [West Papua National Committee] organize. People at the office understand that work with the movement so they are not surprised now.

The Indonesian government is pushing West Papuans to be dependent. The government is taking on more civil servants, who have to follow government rules. But I do not follow them. My activism is a risk – they could sack me. The UN says everyone has the right to work – so if I am not violent, I should not lose my job. They do not allow us to protest or use our West Papua flag.

In Biak in 1998, I was part of a peaceful action. We put up the West Papua flag from 2-6 July. The government invited me to talk at the parliament building. I said no; I wanted to be with the people. We had no weapons, but the police and military arrested us and started shooting. I did not run away, I lay down and some other protesters did the same. The military threw rocks at the people lying down – some of them stood up and the military shot them. This was the Biak city massacre of 6 July 1998. There was more violence and rape across the city. They decided to put me in prison for six and half years, but later the president freed me and other political prisoners.

I was arrested again for peaceful protesting on 1 December 2004. I had followed the law and informed police before the protest. They arrested all the people who held the Morning Star flag during the protest, including me and Yusak Pakage. They put me in prison for 15 years. Then, on 19 December 2015, they released me with no reason.

We have to fight peacefully and get the support of the world. We hope that the rest of the world will demand the UN get us an independence referendum. It would be even better if the UN agreed to our right to be independent immediately and agreed that they made a mistake with the 1969 sham referendum. Also, why did they only include voters from inside West Papua? There were West Papuans in the Netherlands and other countries. The next independence referendum should give West Papuans everywhere the right to vote.

Elizabeth Ndiwaen, *who lives in the city of Merauke, in the southeast of the country, near the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE) – a very big Indonesian project with palm-oil plantations and industrial agriculture, planned to replace 1.2 million hectares of rainforest.*

I am 34 years old. I am married with four children. My eldest daughter is a teacher, my second child just graduated senior high school, my third child is in junior high school, and my youngest is still in kindergarten. I look after the home, and I sometimes work with the National Human Rights Commission and Pusaka Foundation on problems with the environment and indigenous people.

Here in Merauke, we really feel the occupation. Police and military often beat and threaten us. Also, there are 42 companies including MIFEE operating in Merauke. Every company has its own special-force police and military protecting the company. They often threaten village people.

Before MIFEE began, we were poor but we were happy living on our own land. We used to go to the forest to look for food when we wanted to eat. But when MIFEE came, they destroyed our forests. Our life became difficult. All of our rivers are too polluted so we cannot use them. There is no support from the government for our future.

I wish that MIFEE would stop working here. We are planning to hold a meeting with people from 14 local regions about MIFEE this August. West Papua will one day be free. West Papuans talk about this in public now; we do not want to talk about it in secret any more. To all governments and people, I would like to say clearly that we do not want oppression any more. We need justice.



Homework:

Read more about West Papua in Easier English:

https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/West_Papua_is_now_fighting_for_freedom

And in the original:

<https://newint.org/features/2017/05/01/morning-star-rising/>